Virtual Interview

In the spirit of today's remote workforce and the popularity of eLearning — here's a self-paced virtual interview! Click on any of the questions below to learn more about my background, personal work philosophy, and professional experience.

"What are your professional goals?"
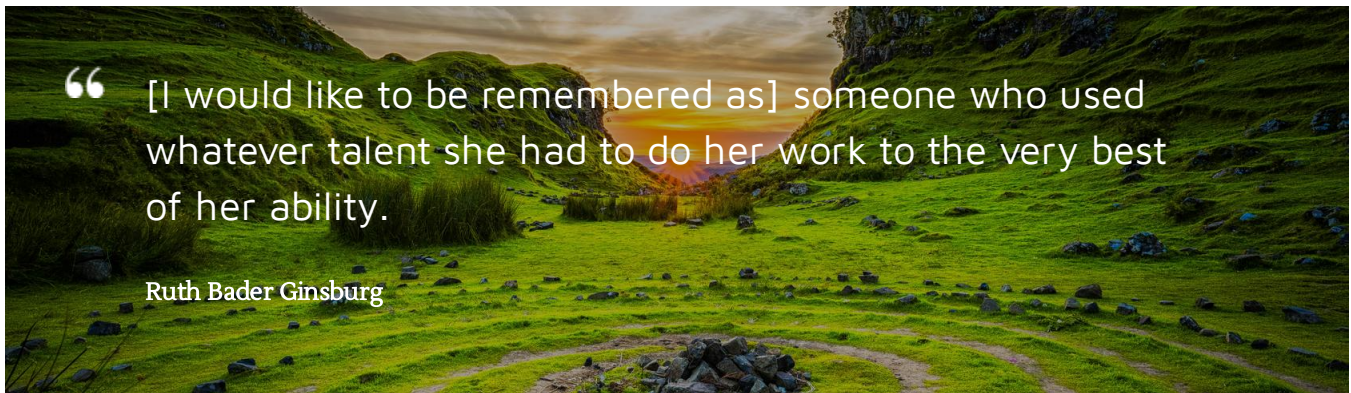
"How do you measure project success?"

"How do you prefer to work with others?"

"What tools are you most familiar with?"

"What learning methodologies to you use most in your work?"

"What are your professional goals?"

> **"** [I would like to be remembered as] someone who used whatever talent she had to do her work to the very best of her ability.
>
> Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Take a gander at this (generally chronological) view of my background and what I'm looking for in a professional role today:

Way back in time...

Formal Educational Background

I really enjoyed the world of higher education - I have a B.S. in Psychology and an M.A. in Industrial/Organizational (I/O) Psychology. I spent much of my time in college and graduate school delivering GRE-prep seminars and assistant teaching introductory psychology courses to undergrads. This background in behavior analysis and instructional design eventually led me to my early career in

learning and development. After graduating, I eventually relocated to Atlanta to begin working as an eLearning instructional designer.

Project Management

After years of working as an instructional designer, I took a gamble and moved across the country to work for a Colorado-based financial technology startup company. Due to the breakneck speed of startup life, I made efforts to expand my knowledge of project management in order to effectively do my job as the operations director. I challenged myself to lead more projects, further my education, and eventually obtained my Project Management Professional certification in 2018. This proved to be a hugely wise investment, as I've continued to oversee training and development projects ever since!

Professional Experience

Here's a quick overview:
In Atlanta, I designed pre-licensing, post-licensing, and continuing education for various professional careers (including real estate, appraisal, and home inspection), all while striving to improve the company's course development through better use of personalized instruction, accessibility, and gamification.

In Colorado, I was given the opportunity to develop multiple departments from the ground up, train new employees, use graphic design software to create visual aids, and move more into the realm of project management.

After the birth of my first child, I eventually went back to my roots and took another job as an instructional designer for another eLearning company. I had to pleasure of helping the company grow its product base by branching out into new verticals. My role quickly expanded to include project manager and course owner responsibilities.

Determined to push myself professionally, I accepted an offer to work as a program manager for a large technology company, helping creating more structure and processes for its learning department. After a year in this role, I was offered the opportunity to officially manage a team of instructional designers and take full responsibility for creating and maintaining the team's entire portfolio of on-demand learning content.

Looking towards the future...

What I'm Looking For

I have loved every company I've ever worked for. Each job has helped me develop my skills and expand my horizons so that I could continue growing into the amazing professional I am today.

I'm also looking for more leadership opportunities and an ability to advance my career, while also maintaining a healthy work-life balance. My ideal position will allow me to be innovative, try new things, and feel like a valued member of the team.
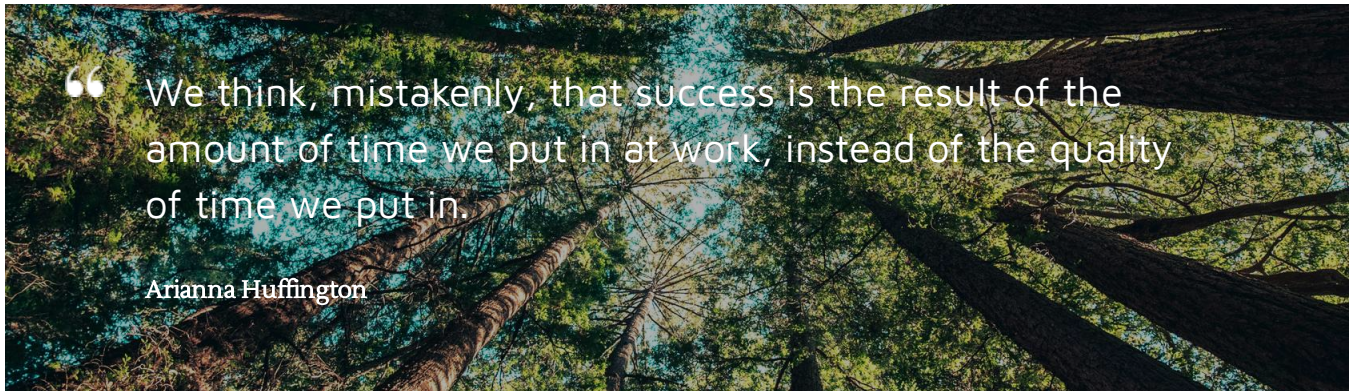
I'm looking to work with an organization that shares my views of what successful learning is: quality learning experiences that result in real world skills and knowledge.

Wherever I end up next, I want to work with a company that believes in the value of what I do and how I do it — so that we can grow and thrive together!

"How do you measure project success?"

> We think, mistakenly, that success is the result of the amount of time we put in at work, instead of the quality of time we put in.

Arianna Huffington

Success is a shape-shifting concept that looks different to everyone, depending on what their desired results are. For stakeholders, it's a return on investment and improved results. For learners, it's anything from passing a licensing exam, gaining a new skill, or being prepared for a better career.

When I evaluate the "success" for the learning experiences I design, I look at several things:

1 — Whether training was the **right approach** to take in the first place.

2 — Whether we have fulfilled the **learning objectives** that were identified for the project.

3 — Whether outcomes are measured in a way that actual reveals changes in behavior or knowledge, and whether learners **demonstrate**

improvement in those areas.

4 Whether the training was developed within appropriate resource constraints (be that **monetary cost, effort cost,** or **deadlines**.) It's not enough to make something incredible — projects have to be completed on time and on budget!

"How do you prefer to work with others?"

A huge part of what I do involves communicating and working with a team of talented people who all contribute to creating amazing products and services! My interaction style is deeply rooted in establishing **mutually respectful relationship**s, where everyone feels like their voices are heard and acknowledged.

My job is to **support** and **enable** the people I manage and work with, without exception. To truly succeed, I do my best to always do what I say, and provide everyone with what they need to do their jobs too!

Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)

SMEs are crucial for the success of nearly any learning program. I have utmost respect for SMEs and their expertise. Unfortunately, SMEs can sometimes be unresponsive, overbearing, or fail to provide needed information without additional guidance. My role when working with SMEs is to communicate expectations clearly, establish a friendly and professional relationship, and communicate regularly — with additional prompts when needed.

Learning Team Members

It's true that it takes a village to make something amazing. I've had the pleasure of working with instructional designers, editors, graphic designers, quality assurance specialists, developers, voice talent, and so many other professionals who help make learning experiences come to life. I work hard to facilitate conversations between different team members when needed, and always make sure I follow through with my commitments to the team.

Direct Reports
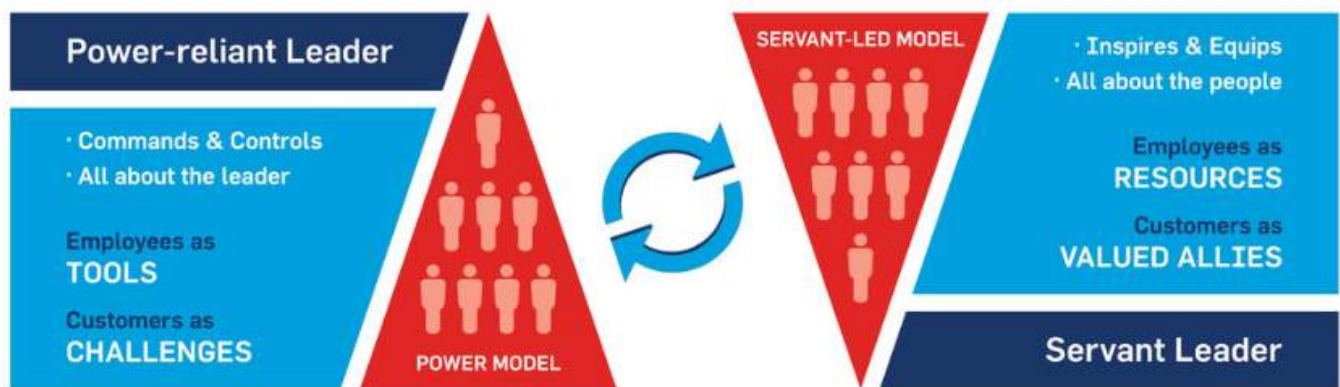
I am a firm believer in having an "open door" policy, where any of my direct reports can feel comfortable reaching out and talking to me about anything that's on their minds. My job is to set clear expectations and do everything I can to ensure that my direct reports have what they need to do their job well. I'm a huge fan of the servant leadership model, which states that leaders exist to pave the way for employees, not the other way around.

Stakeholders

Each stakeholder may have a different level of involvement in any given project, but I find that setting up expectations early helps keep progress on track and to avoid scope creep and potential tensions later.

Customers and End Users

When possible, I've always made a point to volunteer for customer support opportunities, so that I can communicate directly with the customers who consume any learning content my team has development. While it's sometimes challenging to receive learner feedback, it's 100% necessary to the process of improving learning outcomes and experiences.

Testimonials

Below are some comments I've received from colleagues I've worked with, as well as my approaches to working with SMEs, direct reports, customers, and more.
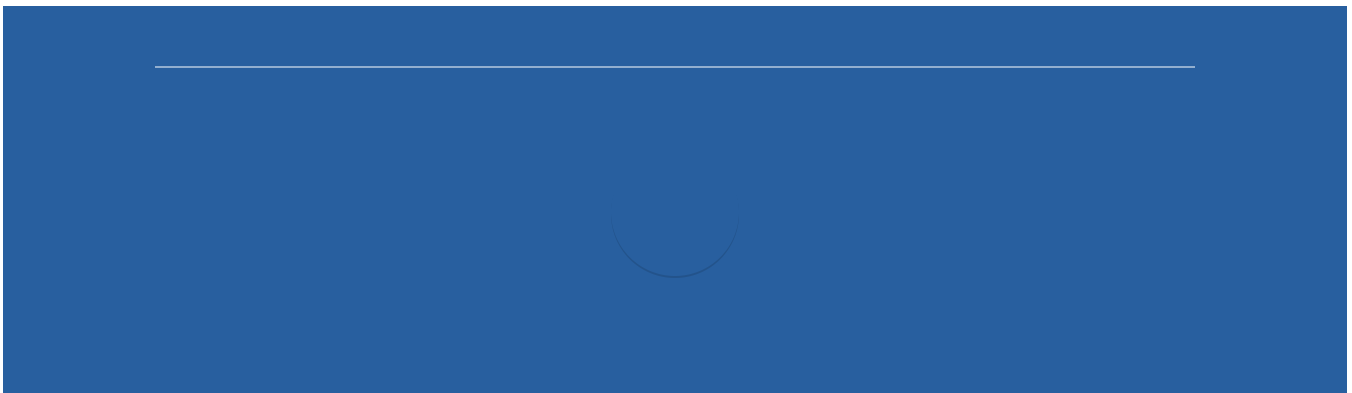
"[Kristin] effectively prioritizes a never-ending list of tasks while ensuring her stakeholders' projects succeed. She is also excellent at breaking down large concepts and explaining them in an easily digestible manner, a trait that is rare and invaluable in the workforce. "

- Director, Obsidian

"I just wanted to put in writing how incredibly great your sections always are. They are so well-researched and incredibly well-written. It's such a pleasure to work on them. I was just telling my husband that they're "light as air" and cover all the bases ... and realized I should tell you, not him. "

- Editor, The CE Shop

"[You] are a kind, thoughtful, and ever positive person who takes the time to bring a little light into the most mundane of interactions. Your demeanor is always very calming, even during stressful interactions or tight deadlines. Thank you for being that person."

- SME, Cradlepoint

"What tools are you most familiar with?"

Whether it's designing new courses in state-of-the-art LMS platforms, keeping in touch with other members of a remote team, or managing various ongoing projects to stay on track with impending deadlines — technology and all of its glory are **deeply ingrained** in everything I do.

Below are just some of the tools I use most often in my work. Of course, different projects and organizations require different approaches, so I'm always **happy to learn** a new program or tool when necessary!

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS	COURSE DEVELOPMENT TOOLS	PROJECT MANAGEMENT TOOLS	COLLABORATION TOOLS

In previous roles, I've often worked with various organization's proprietary LMS platforms, but I'm also familiar with learning management systems like **Absorb**, **TalentLMS**, and **Thinkific**.

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS	COURSE DEVELOPMENT TOOLS	PROJECT MANAGEMENT TOOLS	COLLABORATION TOOLS

I regularly use **Adobe Illustrator**, **InDesign**, and **Photoshop** to create images, **Camtasia** or **Adobe Premiere Pro** to make quick videos, and **Articulate 360** to develop course structures.

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS	COURSE DEVELOPMENT TOOLS	PROJECT MANAGEMENT TOOLS	COLLABORATION TOOLS

Every organization has different project management tools they love, and I've (mostly) enjoyed working with them all. **Trello**, **Jira**, and **Asana** are just a few tools I've utilized in previous roles.

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS	COURSE DEVELOPMENT TOOLS	PROJECT MANAGEMENT TOOLS	COLLABORATION TOOLS

Technology helps us all work together! As someone who has worked remotely for over 6 years, I'm well acquainted with **Microsoft Teams**, **Slack**, **Google Workspace**, **Zoom**, and **GoTo Meeting**.

"What learning methodologies to you use most in your work?"

Learning methodologies are an important foundation for instructional design and learning development. Using the following models, I like to create tools and processes for my teams to follow so that we can consistently produce high-quality learning content that delivers measurable learning results.

ADDIE Model

Ah, the ADDIE model. It's the bread and butter of all instructional design. Using this model helps identify a training need (a step that is skipped more often than you'd think) and provides all of the steps needed to design and improve learning experiences over time. ADDIE is an acronym that stands for:

1. **Analysis** - Step one is always to determine why a training is needed. Is there a problem with performance? Is that problem due to a lack of knowledge? Or is it due to some other issue that needs to be addressed? Knowing what performance gaps are causing problems impacts the rest of the process from here.
2. **Design** - Consider this the planning phase, when an instructional designer starts to build out the general plan and scope of the training.
3. **Development** - I like to build a detailed storyboard when developing a new course or training. Development is the time when information is fleshed out and learning materials are actually created.
4. **Implementation** - Time to get this training in front of learners! Implementation occurs once the course or training is presented to the target audience.
5. **Evaluation** - This is the step that really makes the ADDIE model into a cycle, rather than a linear process. Trainings should be continually evaluated to measure outcomes (and subsequently the success) of the learning experience. If outcomes aren't meeting expectations, go back to step one and start again. Even excellent training need to be improved now and again.

The Kirkpatrick Model   —

Who doesn't love the Kirkpatrick model? This evaluation model basically measures the success of training at four different levels:

1. **Level 1 (Reaction):** This is essentially how the learner felt about the training. You can see this being measured with exit surveys or other simple tools. It's a good start, but doesn't always really provide adequate measures of success.

2. **Level 2 (Learning):** Did the learner actually retain the information that was provided in the training? Generally, this is measured via a knowledge test or quiz at the end of a training. Too often, this is highest level that is measured in eLearning, due to logistical constraints.

3. **Level 3 (Behavior):** A step above learning is the behavior level of measuring training success. Behavior is demonstrated by whether the training impacted how learners act and behave, even after the course is over. Did the training change how learners act, even months after the training? This is usually measured by observing learners' behavior after training is completed.

4. **Level 4 (Results):** The top level of the Kirkpatrick model is what we're all really trying to measure. Did the training have a meaningful impact on whatever problem it was created to address? This could be a decrease in costs, increase performance, or any other outcome that benefits the business or learner. Sometimes ROI is considered the "fifth" level of the Kirkpatrick model, but this is really just another aspect of results.

Experiential Learning   —

The basic premise of Kolb's experiential learning theory is that all people approach learning experiences the same way they approach day-to-day life. So, whether you're in a training seminar, an online course, or a hands-on project, you approach problem-solving and decision-making the same way. Every experience provides an opportunity to learn something new.

Experiential learning states that there are four "steps" (though, you guessed it, it's more of a learning cycle than a linear process) to learning: **experiencing**, **reflecting**, **thinking**, and **acting**. In other words - encountering something new, thinking about what you're seeing, making conclusions about what you've seen, and experimenting with new actions based on what you learned.

Kolb also asserts that every learning has a preferred learning style (shown below). While I believe that learning styles has merit, I also believe that it's more important to tailor content to the learning style it best lends itself to, rather than trying to t a square peg into a round hole by fitting content to a pre-destined learning style.

Self-Directed Learning (SDL)

Finally, I feel strongly that all learning programs should aim to empower learners to be the **masters of their own learning experience**.

A learning team's objective is to create a structured environment where the learner can choose **how to approach the content** in a way that results in the learner mastering the material. I facilitate the learning experience by providing approachable information, detailed feedback, and meaningful support - while the learner brings self-motivation, curiosity, and self-reflection to the table.

For this reason, I am also a huge proponent of **inquiry-based learning**, where learners are provided with novel situations that must be analyzed at a deeper level to fully absorb the material.